A String of Pearls.

BY ELIZA F. POLLARD, AUTHOR OF "ROGER THE RANGER," ETC.

CHAPTER VII.

A BRAVE STEP.

"I CANNOT remain here any longer. I have been trying to make up my mind to run away for months past—now I will do it." Thirza was standing in the centre of a small attic, the sun was streaming in through a window in the sloping roof, the heat was intense, but the girl did not seem to feel it—she was accustomed to the place; it was the only spot on earth which bore for her the semblance of home. A poor place indeed, with its dingily-papered walls; but, then, they were covered with sketches and paintings—some of rare merit, given to Thirza by artists for whom she had sat. There were portraits of herself at different ages, the child's face merging into the girl's, all giving promise of the beauty which was just ripening. An iron bedstead, a couple of chairs, a table with jug and basin, and a looking-glass, completed the furniture, if we except an old black box, covered with addresses, seeming to have travelled half the world over, which occupied a corner. This box Thirza now stood and contemplated.

"It's too big, I could never get it away without Mère Claude seeing it and asking questions," she muttered to herself; "and if I go at all I must go to-day by the cheap night mail to England. Aunt Charles is gone off on business to Vincennes, and will not be back till late at night. She will think I have gone to bed, and will not trouble herself about me until to-morrow, when she will want her chocolate, and wonder why I do not bring it."

Stooping, she pulled a portmanteau, almost as travel-worn as the trunk, from beneath the bed.

"That will do," she said. "I can carry it under my cloak." Opening the big trunk, she began hastily sorting the contents. Her worldly possessions were few; it was soon done. Three things she laid carefully on her bed—a miniature case, an old Bible, and a much-worn green pocket-book.

She opened the case and looked, till tears gathered in her eyes, at the portrait of a fair, delicate woman, so utterly unlike herself that it was impossible to conceive that they could be mother and daughter, and yet Thirza spoke to her as such. "Dear mother, you told me if my father died, and *she* made me too unhappy, I was to go to England to your old nurse, Rebecca Marshall, and that if she were still living she would take me in; the address and money for the journey I should find in the pocket-book. My father *is* dead; you know I did not love him, he was cruel and hard, and made me what I hate being, a model; and this woman is worse—she will make me bad, and then I shall never go where you are, I shall never see you again, my own sweet mother;" and she kissed the miniature passionately, and slipped it into her pocket. Then she opened the Bible, and read what was written on the first page—

"Ada Compton, from her Mother;" and below, in another handwriting, "I give this sacred book to my dear little Thirza, to be her guide and comfort when I shall be no more beside her. My darling, 'keep thyself unspotted from the world.'"

"I have tried, but everything is against me; I must go away," said Thirza, closing the book and placing it in the portmanteau. Then she slipped the elastic band off the pocket-book and examined it. It contained two ten-pound notes, and an envelope addressed to Mrs. Marshall, 10, Ebury Street, London.

"'Does Mrs. Marshall live here?'" p. 147.

"That will do," said Thirza; "with twenty pounds—500 francs—and the little I have managed to save myself I shall be able to live for a long time, and work is sure to come. London cannot be worse than Paris, and I know the world!"

She jumped up, filled the portmanteau, locked and strapped it, made up another parcel of things which she evidently did not care to leave behind, and then looked at her watch, a small gold one of some value, which she wore hidden away.

"You pretty thing!" she said, smiling at it, "I've had trouble enough to keep you; but never mind, we will go away together. Five o'clock; I can easily catch the six-o'clock train. If it had been winter instead of summer, no one would have been any the wiser; as it is, I must try and dodge Mère Claude;" and talking to herself—a habit she had acquired from being much alone with her own thoughts—she put on her hat and light waterproof cloak, took up her luggage, and prepared to leave the room. On the threshold she paused, and looking round, shook her head sadly.

"I'm sorry for my pictures! Oh, I know," and quickly she took them down from the wall, and opening the now empty black box, piled them in, locked it, and put the key in her pocket.

"There," she said, triumphantly. And this time she left the attic and ran down the long flight of narrow stairs, hustling two or three people on the way, until she reached the door leading to the courtyard. Bending forward, she looked round. There, sure enough, was Mère Claude, the *concierge*, standing at the door of her lodge, her arms akimbo, watching every one going in or out.

"What a nuisance!" said Thirza, under her breath.

At that moment a workman passing near the lodge stopped to speak to Mère Claude, who, in answering, turned her back on Thirza. Like a shot the girl ran across the courtyard, and half way down the street.

"That was luck!" she thought, and without stopping she walked rapidly on, until she reached the Boulevard, where she hailed a cab. "Gare du Nord," she said, as she got in; and the vehicle rolled on.

* * * * *

"Did you notice that girl just in front of us as we entered the boat?" said Sir James Fleming to Mr. Dobson, as the two stood together on the upper deck of the night mail boat from Calais to Dover.

"No, I did not; but why do you ask?" returned the lawyer.

"Because she reminded me so forcibly of that girl who came to the studio—the model, you know," answered Sir James.

"Indeed!" replied Mr. Dobson. "It is hardly likely she would think of going to England."

"Unless she found it advisable to leave Paris," said Sir James. "She may have friends in England. Philip told me that her mother was English, and she spoke our language perfectly."

"I see you still believe she knows something of the lost property," said Mr. Dobson.

"I do," answered Sir James, "and in the interest of your client I should advise you not to lose sight of the girl. She may be only a tool of others, but I am persuaded she is not wholly innocent."

"Mr. Philip Fleming seemed so sure of her honesty," said Mr. Dobson.

"Well, I have given you the benefit of my doubts," answered Sir James; "you must act as you think right."

"Supposing we take a turn on the lower decks, we may come across the person you saw," said Mr. Dobson.

"I am willing," answered Sir James, and the two men strolled leisurely through the boat.

It was such a lovely night, most of the passengers remained on the decks; but, notwithstanding as careful an examination as possible, Sir James could see no one who at all reminded him of Thirza.

"You must have been mistaken," said Mr. Dobson.

"Possibly," answered Sir James, in a tone of voice which distinctly intimated "I am certain I am not mistaken;" and he hung about the boat and on the platform of the railway station until the last minute, but without any satisfactory results.

Not till the mail train was well out of the station did a girl in a long cloak and thick veil emerge from the ladies' waiting-room.

"Thank you," she said to a porter who was waiting outside with a portmanteau; "is there anything to pay?"

"No, miss, they did not even open it; but you've missed your train."

"I travel third class," she answered; "how long must I wait?"

"About a quarter of an hour, but you can get into the carriage; I'll put your things in for you."

"Thank you," said Thirza, and she followed the porter. Her manner was so composed, she might have been an old traveller instead of a novice; but she had early learnt to hide her feelings, to plan and contrive.

She had seen Sir James, and was aware by his expression that he had at least partially recognised her, and, determined to avoid him, she went straight down to the ladies' cabin. There she rearranged her dress, wrapped a large veil round her hat, pressing it well down over her face.

When the boat stopped she was on deck in the shadow of a cabin, and so quickly and dexterously glided into the crowd that she was almost the first to land. Fortunately, the morning was misty. Seeing a porter, she held out her portmanteau: "The ladies' waiting-room, please," she said.

"You must go through the Customs first," said the man; "but if you will give me your keys I will get you through."

"Thank you," said Thirza, giving him the keys.

"There's the ladies' room; you can wait there till I call you." And thus it came to pass that Sir James did not catch sight of her.

It was still early morning when Thirza got out of the cab at No. 10, Ebury Street, paid the man, and, taking her portmanteau in her hand, rang the bell.

"Bless me, who can that be a-pealing away at this hour?" said Mrs. Marshall, pausing in the act of pouring water into the tea-pot. "Just you go and see, 'Enery," she added.

Without answering, "'Enery" slipped on his coat, went up the kitchen stairs, unbolted the front door, opened it, and looked out.

He almost started back at what he saw.

The journey, the excitement, had, if possible, added to the beauty of Thirza's face; there was an anxious pathos in the large, dark eyes, and the rich colour had faded from her cheeks.

"Does Mrs. Marshall live here?" she asked, steadying her voice; for suddenly she realised all the answer meant for her.

"Yes, miss; but it's early hours for visitors," answered Marshall.

"I know it is; I beg your pardon," said Thirza. "But I've come all the way from Paris."

Now, Paris to Henry Marshall conveyed the idea of a den of wickedness, and this beautiful creature who thus suddenly appeared at his door was by no means reassuring.

"My house is a private boarding-house, very respectable; we don't take strangers in," he answered.

Thirza smiled, such a smile as Henry Marshall never remembered seeing before, and he grew more uncomfortable, shifted his foot, and made as if he would shut the door on this siren's face.

"Please don't," she pleaded, understanding the movement. "I know what you mean, but if you would just take this to your wife you can shut the door and I'll wait on the doorstep till she fetches me;" and taking a letter out of her pocket, she gave it him.

"Why didn't you say you was recommended?" said the man. "I'll call the missus. Come in."

"No, I'll stop here," answered Thirza, with a little, haughty toss of her head, and leaning carelessly against the iron railing.

"There's a young lady asking for you, Becky. She gived me this, or I should have turned her away," said Marshall, handing his wife the letter.

For a second she examined the writing, then exclaimed, "Sure, it can't be Miss Ada! It's nigh upon ten years since I heard from her." She broke the seal, and read—

"DEAR GOOD REBECCA,—If ever you receive this letter, my child will be the bearer, and she will be in trouble! I know you will not turn her away from your door. I am dying, broken-hearted. My dear old nurse, take care of my darling.—Your unhappy

"ADA GRIMALDI."

The letter fell from Rebecca's hand.

"It was all along of that Italian fellow," she exclaimed, hurrying past her husband up the stairs.

"Come in, my dear, come in," she said, laying her hand on Thirza's arm and drawing her into the house. And the girl knew by instinct she had found a friend.

CHAPTER VIII.

SCHOOL LIFE.

"OH! Marguerite, you might help me, you are so clever!" said a young French girl, stooping over Marjory, as she sat at her desk, her head bent over her books in deep study.

"Really, Léonie, you ought to help me rather!" answered Marjory; "I am only an English girl, and have been in France barely six months."

"That does not signify at all—you are wonderful. Madame says so; I heard her telling one of the professors she had never known anyone with such a clever head. You are safe for your diploma. But I am so stupid! Arithmetic, participles—all get muddled up together in my brain, and the nearer the time approaches for that dreadful examination the stupider I get. Do help me; it will be so dreadful if I fail; we are so poor, and my mother has sacrificed so much to fit me for a governess," and the girl's eyes filled with tears.

Léonie Carrel was a sallow-faced, narrow-chested girl, physically weak, and lacking brain power. Poor and common-looking, she was a favourite with no one—governesses and pupils alike looked down upon her and snubbed her. More than once Marjory had stood up for her, and had taken especial pains with her in the English class. Léonie was therefore devoted to her, and was always at hand to render her any little service.

"What are you in trouble about now?" asked Marjory, suppressing a sigh at the interruption.

"That dreadful history!" answered Léonie. "Monsieur Duras is coming this afternoon and I know nothing; he was so rapid last time I could not follow him."

"Where are your notes?" asked Marjory.

"I have none, I tell you; I could not follow him," said the girl sadly.

Marjory rose, gathered her work together, saying, "Come into the class-room, I will lend you my notes, and if you will really work, I will try to help you. Come."

"You are an angel," said Léonie.

Marjory smiled; she was sorry for the girl, and, without knowing why, felt drawn towards her.

At the end of an hour Léonie had mastered the dreadful history, and throwing her arms impulsively round Marjory, she exclaimed, "Ask me what you will I will do it for you, if only you will continue to help me; it is my only chance, no one ever explained anything to me before."

Marjory was touched. "I will do what I can for you, Léonie, if you will really work; but you know I cannot afford to play, I have my own examinations to pass. If you knew how I long for them to be over and to go home!"

"I will work day and night now I have a chance of success, and if I pass it will be your doing, and my mother will bless you," said Léonie.

"Very well," answered Marjory, "we will work together for an hour every day."

Marjory had been six months in Paris at the Institution Lambert, and her progress had been so rapid that Madame had decided she should present herself for the "brevet supérieur" at the end of March. From the first Marjory had thrown herself heart and soul into her work, and her natural talents helping, she overcame all difficulties. Entirely engrossed in her work, the unpleasantnesses of French school life scarcely affected her. She was popular with everyone, but especially with the directress, and enjoyed, therefore, many privileges, one of which she especially valued—namely, a small room to herself; and every Sunday she was allowed out, and after going to church she spent the afternoon at the hotel, the proprietress treating her with the utmost kindness. Here Philip Fleming met her and gave her news of the lost will, or rather the futile search for it, which was still going on.

"I am afraid Sir James will insist upon foreclosing," he said one day; "he is of opinion that Mr Harcroft

was wandering when he made that statement to me, and, of course, I have no proof to the contrary."

"It seems hard," answered Marjory, "and Sir James does not need the money as I do. I wish I had never heard anything about it, then I should not have been disappointed."

"You bear it very bravely," said Philip; "most people would have been content to bemoan their fate, but you have turned even your loss to good account."

"I needs must," answered Marjory, "I am not alone. I have my little Noel to think and work for," and a tender light crept into Marjory's eyes, softening her face, and making it, at least to Philip's eyes, almost angelic in its sweetness. It is so good to work for others, however hard and uncongenial the labour; it purifies and elevates the soul by the very necessity of self-denial and the personal sacrifices which it imposes.

Nevertheless Marjory was sad at heart that evening when she returned to the Institution. She had never before quite given up the hope of capturing that wealth, but now like a will-o'-the-wisp it seemed to escape her for ever and aye.

She was aggravated to find Léonie with a radiant face waiting for her.

"How tired you are looking, *ma chérie*," said the French girl; "let me help you to undress."

"No, thank you, I would rather be alone," said Marjory.

Léonie's face fell. "And I had something to tell you," she said.

"You must be quick, then, for it's nearly ten o'clock, and the lights in the *dortoir* will be extinguished," said Marjory.

"That does not matter; I know my way, and can creep into bed in the dark," answered Léonie, slipping into Marjory's room.

"Well, what is it that has delighted you so greatly?" asked the latter, impatiently, longing to get rid of her companion.

"I have an aunt," said Léonie; "she is a wonderful person, some people call her a fortune-teller, some a clairvoyant. When my mother thought of making me a governess she consulted her; the cards were favourable, so I was sent to school. Until now I have always thought it a mistake, because I am not clever; it has been such drudgery!"

"I think you would have been happier helping your mother," said Marjory.

"Oh, but the position is so much better," answered Léonie. "My cousin Thirza has often said she wished she had my chances; you see, she is very beautiful. Her mother was English and died when she was ten years old, then my Aunt Charles adopted her; she would not have done so if she had not been quite sure of making a lot of money out of her as a model. Thirza was a good girl and worked well for her, though she hated the business; but six months ago she ran away, and no one knows what has become of her."

"Did you say your cousin's name was Thirza?" asked Marjory.

"Yes, my cousin Thirza. I am sorry she is gone; she was good to me. I was very fond of her. She had a hard life with Aunt Charles."

Marjory was silent for a few seconds, then she said, "But that was not what you were going to tell me."

"Oh, no," said Léonie. "I was going to say that I am quite happy about my examinations now, for Aunt Charles told me to-night that I should pass. She said a fair girl was pulling me on. We were running together, but she was in advance, only she stopped, gave me her hand, and helped me on; and so, though she reached the post first, I came in second. Of course, you are the fair girl, and you are pulling me along."

"Unless you work, it won't be of much use," said Marjory.

"I am working," said Léonie, "now I know I have a chance. What was the use before?"

"You mean to say you are giving yourself a chance," answered Marjory, laughing. "Good night, we ought to be in bed."

"I wish you would go with me to my aunt, and consult her about that money you have lost. She is very wonderful; she has told people where to find many things," said Léonie.

"Nonsense," answered Marjory. "Go to bed;" and, literally taking Léonie by the shoulders, she put her out of the room.

"Curious that that girl Thirza should turn up again," she thought. "I wonder whether Philip knows she has run away. I will remember to ask him when I see him next Sunday."

(To be continued.)

CONCERNING THE CARE OF HOUSE PLANTS.

BY AMY S. WOODS.

(Concluded from page 135.)

NEXT to ferns in popularity come foliage plants, such as the ever-useful Aspidistra, or Parlour Palm; the Ficus Elastica, or india-rubber plant; the charming little Christmas-tree, Araucaria Excelsa, and the numerous varieties of Azaleas, variegated begonias, and palms, and perhaps we might include the different kinds of Euonymus, though they are really outdoor plants. In potting these plants remember that *firm* potting is a *sine quâ non*—the soil may be rather stiffer than that recommended for ferns—and do not fall a victim to the popular craze for using large pots. From five to seven-inch pots are the most suitable for all but very large plants; and though the soil will need renewing once a year, do not remove the plants into larger pots unless the roots appear to be pot-bound. Plants grown in pots of only a moderate size have invariably a more vigorous top-growth than those whose roots have room to spread at the expense of the leaves and branches.

During the spring and autumn a little soot and water,

A Lady Gardener.

liquid manure, or some of the concentrated manure sold by florists, may be used with good effect; and if you can replace your azaleas and araucarias with flowering plants during the summer, they will be much stronger and healthier for a sojourn in the open air; either placed in your flower-beds, where they will set off your bedding plants to great advantage, or set out in their pots in some shady corner of the garden.

Beware, however, of late and early frosts, and remember that if left in the pots the plants will require more water than when planted in the earth itself. A piece of board or some bricks or tiles should also be laid under the pots to prevent the ingress of worms.

With regard to watering these plants in the house, the suggestions I made respecting the watering of ferns may be carried out, except in the case of begonias, which must not have water poured upon their leaves, as it renders them liable to split into holes. Soak their pots in water without touching the leaves, and remove all dust from the latter with a feather brush or a very slightly damp sponge.

Dust is a great enemy to all plants, as they breathe through their leaves, and when their lungs become choked the health of the plant naturally suffers.

If the weekly shower-bath does not suffice to keep your plants clean, as will probably be the case in

London or other large towns, sponge the leaves as well once a week, or oftener if necessary. Never leave your plants in a room while it is being swept, and beware of letting them stand near a window which is likely to be opened by the housemaid on a cold or frosty morning.

If you do keep any plants near a window—and there is no place where they thrive better if only draughts are guarded against—adopt the old-fashioned plan of turning them round about every two or three days, to ensure their growing regularly, as they naturally are drawn towards the light. On the subject of *flowering* house-plants I have not space to touch; the topic forms a wide study, and the hobby one of ever widening and increasing interest.

Few healthier and happier occupations can be found than the tending of flowers, whether indoors or out, and none perhaps which bring a greater reward. Who will grudge pains and toil when the result will be a wealth of beauty—plants and flowers to brighten our homes, alike in the golden hours of summer and the drear, dull days of winter! Silent messengers, ever pointing our thoughts upward to the great Giver of all beauty, who once in the far-off fields of Galilee deigned to consider in His teaching the lowly lilies of the field.

MY HAPPY POSSESSIONS.

BY CHARLOTTE SKINNER, AUTHOR OF "THE MASTER'S MESSAGES," ETC.

MY SONG.

THIS universe is full of music. Like the fingers of a great musician the wind sweeps o'er the world, and from leaf to mountain nature responds in song. Little birds on swinging boughs take up the strain, and the great ocean swells out the chorus. From storm-clouds mighty waters sound forth their pæans, and in the mid-night skies the stars sing together like they did when the world was young

But from my infancy I have heard a song whose cadences were more enthralling than the softest whisperings of summer breezes amid forest boughs, or the rapturous trillings of sky-hid lark. No organ ever voiced it, nor soft timbrel, nor stormy drum gave forth its notes. I have heard it in lonely mountain cottages; I have caught its melody amid the din of machinery, and from hospital wards its strains have echoed.

I heard my mother sing it in days long, long ago, and from her learnt to make it

MY SONG

too, and in faint resemblance, sing it for myself.

The Author of "my song." Its first faint prelude was heard when the blight of sin fell on the garden of Eden, but centuries later, amid the hills of Galilee, it echoed louder and louder till the heights round fair Jerusalem caught up the strain, and the song was there perfected, its music complete.

In the heart of the Eternal One it was first conceived, and then He came on earth, and in a lonely life and painful death, gave forth its notes to the world. For "my song" is no dream song. I might myself dream of wonderful melodies, of strains vibrating with rapturous sounds, such as angels sing, but if my lips essayed to sing them, they would be dumb.

A poor boy whose mother was very ill, and lacked nourishments, wrote a song, and came to a great singer, and said, "I do not want to beg money, but if you would sing my song for me, then I know people would buy it, and I should then be able to help my mother!" She listened to the boy's pleadings, then out of pity sang his song, and soon the boy was rich and afterwards famous. But he could not sing his own song, another had to do it for him. The heart of the Eternal was touched with infinite pity, and the song awoke, but He sang it Himself, not even to an archangel did He trust it. And the song kept time to the beating of His own heart, for it was a song *lived out.*

The author of "St. Hilda" was a profligate, and died amid sin's discords; the author of "Home, Sweet Home," was a homeless outcast. But the Author of "my song" wrought out its notes in deeds. Have you ever listened to the song of the blacksmith's anvil? Who makes that song? Why, the brawny blacksmith with his strong arms. So did the strong Saviour beat out the music of "my song"—with heart-beats.

The subject of "my song." What is the song of the rain-drops? *Purity.* "I make clean," they carol as they fall. What do the birds sing about? I always think *sunshine* is the title of their song. And what do the waves chant forth? Surely *power* is their theme. And if you ask for the subject of my song, I answer, "REDEMPTION," and that means *purity;* that means *sunshine;* that means *power.* It means that I have been to Christ's school of music and learnt from Him the song He wove with His life. I've been to Calvary, and He put this new song into my mouth, "I've been redeemed, there's no condemnation now for me." Do you know the song? Have you ever learnt it? Do not say you have no voice for singing; this is a heart-song, not a lip-song. You sigh, "I cannot sing the old songs,"—perhaps not, for they are very unsatisfactory; but this song is ever new, and every heart can sing it—with the Master's help.

Mendelssohn once went to see the great organ at Freiburg. The old custodian, not knowing him, refused permission to play. At length after much persuasion he granted him leave to play a few notes. Mendelssohn took his seat, and soon the most beautiful music was breaking forth. The old man was spell-bound, but after a little while he went up beside the great master and asked his name. "Mendelssohn." "Mendelssohn! and I refused you permission to play on my organ!" And there he stood humiliated, self-condemned.

Christ comes to us, and says, "Let Me put music in your life; let Me draw forth from your heart sweet strains of joy and praise." But so many of us refuse. Surely it is because we do not recognise the great Master of Song.

I stood in the same old church at Freiburg, but there was no sound of pealing organ. All was dusty, dreary, and silent, save for occasional jarring sounds from the street outside. There was no master of song there. The fingers of the one who once touched those keys with such magical power are now mouldering into dust. It was no good for me to attempt to touch them. So, without one strain of music to cheer me on my way, I left.

But our Master is not dead. He ever lives, and is ever near to help us make sweet music. Then why are there so many silent lives?

The season of "my song." Years ago I was walking along a lonely country road late at night. On either side rose fine forest trees, and overhead the sky was radiant with stars. The air was fragrant with flower-odours, and everything breathed of peace. Suddenly there was a burst of song, such wondrous strains and trills it seemed as if the earth and heavens grew silent to listen. I had never heard the nightingale before. I travelled over the same road a few weeks ago, the night was very dark, and the wind sighed mournfully. Ah! there was no song then to cheer the traveller. The nightingale only sings in the pleasant spring-time, and the lark only when the skies are sunny. But "my song" is meant for all times. The captive Jews said, "How can we sing the Lord's song in a strange land?" Why, then was the very time and place to sing it! Many a saint can say, "I call to remembrance my song in the night." It is in the night, when the shadows are thick around us, we need the song to cheer us, and it is then we can best praise Him, for the echo of our song says to all around, "I'm still trusting."

Indeed, "my song" should be *continually* rising. My whole life must be a song. In the old, old days singing men and singing women were appointed, but they only sang in the neighbourhood of the lofty white, golden temple, becoming just ordinary men and women when they returned to their distant homes. But now the whole earth is recognised as God's temple, and all His children appointed to serve in that vast temple, we can never descend into being only ordinary women, but should ever glory in the name, and ever prove it true—"*A Singing Woman.*" But, oh, the sad pauses in our lives, which have no making of music in them!

The tune of "my song." If I am going to "praise Him," the tune of "my song" must be a joyful one. How to get the tune—"singing in your hearts." How to keep the tune—"singing with grace in your hearts." We are apt to get out of tune through there being so many jarring sounds in the world. But if the heart be right, the tune will be right. And who can give the grace which will keep us in tune but our great singing Master!

I am anxious my song should be as perfect as possible. Singers of earthly songs spend years in practising, and never cease to practise. And why should I, the singer of a heavenly song, not use the same care and effort? Whenever a jarring note is heard, I must haste away to the Master. When my notes are feeble, I must practise and practise till they are stronger, fuller. And from the Master I must get grace to put the proper expression into "my song."

Oh, to be a sweet, tuneful singer to my God!

The effect of "my song." One of the Fisk University students was on board a steamer which had caught on fire. Before committing himself to the waves he carefully fastened life preservers upon his wife and himself. Someone dragged away the wife's, leaving her without hope, save as she could cling to her husband. This she did, placing her hands firmly on his shoulders, and resting there, until, her strength becoming exhausted, she said, "I can hold on no longer."

"Try a little longer," was the response of the agonised husband, "let us sing 'Rock of Ages.'" And as the sweet strains floated over the troubled waters, reaching the ears of the sinking and dying, little did they know whom they comforted. As they sang, one after another of the exhausted ones were seen raising their heads above the overwhelming waves, joining with a last effort in the sweet, pleading prayer. With the song seemed to come strength. Another and yet another was encouraged to renewed effort. Soon in the distance a boat was seen approaching. Could they hold out a little longer? Singing still they tried, and almost with superhuman strength laid hold of the lifeboat.

In one of his letters from Shanghai, Archdeacon Moule describes how he was lying in his boat one Sunday morning, when he heard his boatman repeating the words, "Jesus is our best Friend; I love Thee, my Saviour." The lad said, when questioned, he had never been in a Christian church, but had learned the words from a friend. Round Shanghai you may often hear snatches of prayer and hymns chanted by the boatmen at their work. Often those who sing have no idea as to the true meaning of the words.

I shall never forget the inspiration I received, the fresh hope and joy, from the singing of one sailor, as he stumbled along the deck of a Channel steamer during very dirty weather. And if all this is true about earthly music, what about the heavenly, what about the life-singing? Ought we not to ask ourselves this question, "Is my song inspiring anybody? Is my life's music helping anybody?" Earthly songs may soon be caught up, and the strains echoed over and over again. Am I so singing the heavenly song, that it can be learnt from me just as quickly?

Up yonder in the home of song they sing a melody which only can be learnt down here. I want to join that choir above. But if "my song" is helping no one here below, it is a proof I am not singing it correctly; how then can I hope to join the choir above?

Oh, to sing my song here below, so clearly, so unmistakably, that I may join the choir above, and hear the Master say, "*Little singer, come and sing your song before My Father!*"

A Babe's Influence.—An infant, a prattling child, lying in its cradle, will live again in the better thoughts of those who loved it, and play its part, through them, in the redeeming actions of the world.—*Charles Dickens.*

Worth Noting.—If you would sow a seed whence the whole mental life, like a shady evergreen tree, will unfold itself, full of fragrant bloom and ripe, wholesome fruit, teach your children early to reflect.

"Old Yacht Inn," Chester, near the Cheese Market.

A CHAT ABOUT CHESHIRE CHEESE.

A GREAT deal is being written and said in these days about agricultural depression; and there is unfortunately no room for doubt that matters have been going very hard with English farmers of late years. It is not our present purpose to inquire into the why and wherefore of this sad state of affairs, but rather to point out one way in which something might be done to mend matters. And as, of course, every mother is closely interested in farm produce, we venture to think that, on the lines we propose to take, the subject will be found neither unprofitable nor unsuitable for readers of THE MOTHERS' COMPANION.

As a nation we English folk naturally prefer home-grown to foreign produce, and it is a fact that English goods of all kinds are generally considered superior to imported articles, and are eagerly sought after. This is as it should be. But when we inquire into the origin of our farm produce we find that half the cheese in our markets comes from America; the choicest butter comes from Denmark; and France and the Low Countries supply us largely with eggs and poultry. For butter and cheese alone we are now paying foreigners twenty millions of pounds every year. This emphatically is a condition of affairs which should *not* be.

There are plenty of English farmers, plenty of English acres, and plenty of English cattle to supply, and more than supply all our home needs. Let the farmers of England once realise the fact that they can make better cheese and butter, and rear finer cattle than the farmers of any other country under the sun, and that they can not only supply all England with these commodities, but that they can be very formidable rivals in foreign markets, and we shall hear less about agricultural depression and derelict farms.

In this article space compels us to confine ourselves to some account of only one of many farm industries that are undoubtedly capable of considerable expansion—the industry of cheese-making; one of the most interesting with which the farmer has to do.

The processes of cheese manufacture are few and simple, though there are many persons who would never excel in it. Of course much of what we are about to describe will appear too elementary to some readers, but there are doubtless others to whom even the rudiments of cheese-making are hardly known. Milk, in a general manner of speaking, may be said to consist of casein (or curds) and whey. Casein is the solid white part of milk, and though it contains other substances, it is quite accurate enough to call these curds casein.

The whey is such active principle as is left of the milk, and is the sweet drink that most children remember affectionately through life, after they first taste it at a farmhouse. The great desideratum in the manufacture of cheese is to separate these two substances thoroughly, for if whey is left in the cheese it causes it to bulge out at the sides, and leaves a decomposed flavour which we may recognise in samples of inferior value.

As soon as the evening's milking is completed and stored in a vat, it is cooled down as quickly as possible, and in some of the more complete dairy farms there is a zinc cistern with a false bottom, which is filled with cold water to reduce the temperature. In many farms half the cream is taken away for churning, and the morning's milk is added directly after. The cold water is run off the false

bottom of the vat and hot water substituted until the temperature is raised to 90 deg., and then rennet and anatto are added. Rennet, it may be said for those to whom the terms in cheese-making are strange, is the mild acid that separates the curds from the whey. Other acids would do the same, but this is incomparably the best.

Rennet is formed from the viscera of a calf, and at one time Cheshire farmers made it each day from the prepared skins, but now it may be purchased ready made in bottles at the chemist's, and this is not inferior for all practical purposes to the rennet which farmers make, and it is more convenient.

After it has acted properly, the curds are formed in solid blocks and the whey is run off. This is all done within an hour, and then the curds are carefully cut up to let the whey still further run off. Here again delicacy is needed so as not to let the rich parts of the curds mix with the whey, and impoverish the cheese. Indeed, if the whey is properly run off it *should* be as clear as Rhenish wine, and very like it in appearance, though this would involve a very high standard of excellence indeed in the skill of dairymaids.

The curds are now salted, and the cheese formed into its shape and pressed, and in seven days it is removed to the store-room. After being there for from seven weeks to three months, according to the quality, and more particularly according to the taste of the consumer, it is ready for market.

These, of course, are only short outlines of the methods used in making Cheshire cheese, and even they differ to some extent on different soils, and in different dairies.

The finest chese in Cheshire comes from the neighbourhood of Beeston Castle, and most of that which is made in this district is bought for the London market. It is supremely indifferent to foreign competition, and does not vary in value. This part of Cheshire is very beautiful, and if only it were out of England it would attract thousands of visitors to its health-giving valleys and hills.

Here the sweet meadow grasses grow, and the wild thyme and lotus and many kinds of clover flourish in a natural state, making the summer air fragrant with their pleasant scents.

There is one prevailing requirement among all cheese-makers, and without this all other excellences profit nothing; there should be absolute cleanliness in everything connected with a dairy—the milkmaids, the utensils, the cattle, the byres, and the store-rooms.

These latter are sometimes in unimproved farm buildings near piggeries and other odorous places, and new cheese or milk quickly acquires a foreign flavour. So delicate is it, that in a good dairy a number of cheeses had to be detached from the rest and sold at a lower value because they were manufactured at a time when a few doors had been freshly painted.

The Chester Cheese Market.

Cattle should be driven quietly to their byres and pastures, and have easy access to abundant supplies of good water.

The proper degree of temperature should be hit upon before the rennet is applied, but as this depends much upon the condition of the milk and the state of the atmosphere, experience must be the only guide. In the item of quality there is not only a wide difference of opinion, but the general taste of the public has considerably altered. Formerly, old and rather dry cheese was in the greatest demand, but now a newer and fresher kind of Cheshire is called for, and this to the advantage of the maker in every way. Less salt is mixed with the curds, and the flavour of ripe cheese is gained by adding a little sour milk in the early stage of the manufacture.

We see in the market two kinds of cheese, yellow and white, and the difference is this: Yellow cheese is slightly coloured with a South American herb called anatto. This anatto yields a very strong reddish-yellow colour. It is used either in a pasty state or else in its more modern liquid form. The latter is much better and safer to manipulate.

White cheese, on the other hand, has no colouring, and is made especially for the Manchester and other Northern markets, where there was an idea that anatto affected the flavour—an idea, however, that does not rest on any solid foundation.

Cheshire cheese may be divided into three classes, each of which, however, has its own degree of excellence. There is first of all whole milk cheese, that is to say, cheese that has had no cream at all removed from it; and if this is well made on the best grass lands, it is almost as convertible into money at its full value as government stock. Then there is half-milk cheese, or cheese from which a considerable part of the cream has been removed; and finally there is skim-milk cheese, from which all the cream has been taken away. The half-milk cheeses differ very greatly indeed, but the whole milk and the skim milk are tolerably uniform in value.

We do not know whether, as a result of this article, any of our readers will feel disposed to go in for cheese-making, but the industry is certainly one that deserves more attention than it has hitherto had. We are very glad to notice that, with the object of stimulating and encouraging the manufacture of fancy cheeses, such as Brie, Camembert, and Rochfort, for which Professor Long assures us this country is as well adapted as either France or Switzerland, special prizes will be offered at the British Dairy Farmers' Show this month.

If our farmers will only realise their own capabilities and the wisdom of raising the standard of their products by all-round excellence, by absolute purity and cleanliness, and by thorough sanitary conditions of manufacture, we believe that for them there is yet "a good time coming!"

OVER THE WAY.

THERE is crape on the bell-knob over the way,
And my little children they will not play,
But stand looking out through the window-pane,
Through the growing dusk and the misty rain;
And their eyes are wet with the tear-drop's spray,
For there's crape on the bell-knob over the way.

They do not know yet if it means that pain
Is passed from the man who walked with a cane;
Or the bright little girl has gone to sleep
With whom so oft they have played "Bo-peep;"
Or mother or father has gone to stay;—
That crape on the bell-knob over the way.

They only know this, there is something less
In the house that was full of blithesomeness.
They know there is sorrow, and tears are shed
By some that are living o'er someone dead.
And they haven't a cheerful word to say
While there's crape on the bell-knob over the way.

I am worried now that they feel it so,
And I bend my mouth to their pink ears low;
"Dears, it only means there is rest so sweet
For a tired heart and two tired feet."
Then I stop. They'll say over there some day—
"There's crape on the bell-knob over the way."

BABY'S CLOCK.

NOBODY finks I can tell the time of day, but I can. The first hour is five o'clock in the morning. That's the time the birds begin to peep. I lie still and hear them sing:

"Tweet, tweet, tweet! Chee, chee, chee!"

But mamma is fast asleep. Nobody awake in all the world but just me and the birds. Bimeby the sun gets up and it's six o'clock in the morning. Then mamma opens one eye, and I can hear her say: "Where's my baby?" N'en I keep still—jus' as still as a mouse, an' she keeps saying: "Where's my baby?" N'en all at once I go "Boo!" and she laughs and hugs me, and says I'm a precious. Mamma's nice, and I love her 'cept when she washes my face too hard and pulls my hair with the comb. Seven o'clock! That's when the bell goes jingle, jingle, and we have breakfast. All the eight an' nine an' ten an' 'leven hours I play. I run after butter flies and squirrels, and swing, and read my picture book, and sometimes I cry—just a little bit. Twelve o'clock! That's a bu'ful hour. The clock strikes a lot of times, and the big whistle goes, and the bell rings, and papa comes home, and dinner's ready! The one and two hours are lost. Mamma always carries me off to take a nap. I don't like naps; they waste time. When we wake up the clock strikes three. N'en I have on my pink dress, and we go walking or riding. And so the three and four and five hours are gone. At six o'clock Bossy comes home, and I have my drink of warm milk. N'en I put on my white gown, and I kiss everybody "good-night," and say, "Now I lay me," and get into my bed. Mamma says, "Now the sun and the birdies and my little baby are all gone to bed, and to sleep, sleep, sleep." So I shut my eyes tight, and next you know 'tis morning. An' nat's all the time there is.—*Mrs. C. M. Livingston.*

GOOD HUMOUR.

IT is to the households of the land, and to the mothers and wives whose spirit determines the atmosphere of these households, that we are to look for the maintenance of this excellent virtue. And because good humour is very dependent upon physical estate, the health of the body will often measure the sweetness of the disposition. But mothers are careful and troubled about many things, ready to work for husband and children till they drop down, intent, of necessity, on dinner and clothes, and making habitual sacrifice of higher things. Worn out with the pressure and worry of low cares which seem inevitable, they grow irritable and sharp, and husband and children catch their tone from the dominant key in the domestic disharmony. There is bickering and wrangling where there should be graciousness. The boys marry, and are likely to be domestic tyrants. The girls marry, and are not impossible shrews.

In the present state of domestic life the cares of the average housekeeper are much too heavy. The only remedy is to simplify them, since they cannot be put off. Let breakfast and dinner and tea be meals of civilisation, and not cannibal feasts whereat the poor mother is regularly served up. It is simple food that gives lustre to the eye, force to the hand, wit to the brain, sweetness to the spirit. It is simple clothing whose making leaves leisure for rest, for culture, for the promotion of good humour, and all the social affections.

With this reformed housekeeping and the consequent repairs of the nervous system would come a tacit avoidance of all those disputed topics which are for ever coming up for judgment in households of positive opinion and imperfect self-control. This sort of differing and of endless arguments without results corrodes the soundest affection. Sincere and conscientious men and women, if their nerves are unstrung and their diet too excitive, are more tyrannical, more bitter, more persistent sowers of tares, than the wicked themselves. It was a wise man who said, "It is better to decide a case wrongly than to get into a wrong state of mind."

Again, that simple living which is to leave leisure for culture will enable women to see the relative value of things and not to worry about trifles, which, after all, are the hidden rocks whereon our serenity goes to pieces. Life will not then be darkened because an ink-spot fell upon the parlour table-cloth, or the tired servant uttered an impertinence, or John slammed the outer door, or Jane broke a lamp chimney, or their father forgot this morning his farewell kiss. Nor will each offender be chastened with an angry word or a forbidding gloom of countenance. Less time and thought will be given to the making over of last year's alpaca by Worth's elaborate patterns, less grief to its shortcomings. More time and interest will be invested in the children's games and the great concerns of the world as they lie open in books and papers. So much labour to small ends will not be attempted, because it can be accomplished only at the cost of that noble *being* which is a more helpful gift to the world than the most energetic *doing*.

F. M.

OUR LAST QUARREL.

OF all dreadful things for husband and wife, quarrelling, it seems to me, is the worst. There are many that say, "Oh, a little quarrelling is not bad; it clears the air," and so on. But that is not as *I* have found it, and I ought to know, my temper not being an angel's, by any manner of means. And speaking for myself, I find that quarrels don't leave us as they find us, but after a while they bring about great changes, sometimes even parting quite asunder those God has joined together. And to show I am not talking at random, but learned my lesson under the rod, so to speak, I'll tell you about the worst quarrel I and my husband ever had—the worst, but, thank God, the last.

Well, we were fisher-folk then, and we lived in a village called Silverstrand, from the beach being white and glistening-like with broken shells. We'd been married a matter of two years or so, and we'd one child, little Elsie, just upon a twelvemonth old.

I'd not been well for some weeks, and maybe that had worked upon my temper. Then, too, the weather had been stormy, and Rob (that's my husband) had earned so little that it wasn't easy to keep body and soul together without getting into debt.

Poor food and poor health, and the bread-winner dawdling and moping about at home when he wanted to be at sea—all these things worked mischief with us, and one morning it came to a head. It began through my being late in getting up after a bad night; and, to make matters worse, the weather seemed to have lifted a bit and Rob was anxious to be off to his boat. So he was impatient and I was tired and cross.

"I say, Bess," he called up the stairs, "what's the matter? It's time I was gone, and there's no fire, nor breakfast, nor anything."

"Why don't you make a fire, then, and put on the kettle?" screamed I, finishing dressing the little one. "I don't see why I should do all the work while you look on and wait to be served."

"All right, I'll make a fire," answered Bob; "but you might keep a civil tongue in your head, Bess."

"And pray what do you expect?" said I, coming down with the child crying and fretting in my arms. "You'd aggravate a saint, you would, with your fault-finding!"

At that Bob smiled as provoking as could be, and said he, "My dear, you're so far from being a saint yourself that you can have no idea how much a real one would stand."

"Yes, go on," I said, hot and bitter; "go on mocking and gibing! You're a manly man, aren't you, and a pattern husband! Why," said I, "I'd have done better if I'd married Blacksmith Joe Parsons."

"What—drunken, foul-mouthed Joe?" said Rob, setting his face white and hard.

"Yes," said I, knowing my words would hurt him, and feeling cruelly glad they should. "Yes; for at least he was a man, and there's nothing he wouldn't have been willing to do for me."

"And what about me?" said Rob. "You think I'm not willing?" And I noticed his voice sounded very hoarse and choky.

"I don't *think* about it," I answered; "I'm *sure* you aren't. You are one of the sort that expects a wife to do all while you take it easy. Yes—I wish I'd married Joe!"

And with that my husband turned round and faced me, and said he, "You do, Bess? Very well, then I wish it too. But—who knows?—there may be a chance for you yet. Joe isn't married, that I know of, and it's a common enough thing for us fisher lads to be lost at sea. But there"—and Rob, glancing through the window, saw his partner getting the boat ready—"I can wait no longer. I must go without breakfast." He made a step to the door, then turned back. "Don't let's part in anger, wife," said he, his eyes dim and wet; "say good-bye to me."

He waited a minute; then once more he said, "Won't you bid me good-bye, Bess? Not even for the sake of the old times when we loved each other, or thought we did?"

But I held my tongue, and didn't so much as glance his way, nor even move till I heard the door slam behind him and the baby wailing out, "Dad! Dad!"

Well, I was in a fine temper all the morning, none the less because I knew very well I was the worse of the two. I gave the baby some bread and milk at dinner-time, but I could eat nothing myself. All the afternoon I sat sewing, while the child played on the floor, but my eyes would wander away, peering out through the window at the sea, for the wind began to get up and the water to roughen; and as I thought of my poor lad, knocking about far from home on the angry waves, I knew how I loved him, and how, if I had to marry over again, Blacksmith Joe wouldn't have a bit of a chance. For my anger had cooled down now, and I was sorrier than ever I'd been in my life before.

With the fading light the fishing fleet came scudding in, the storm signals being up; and longing to see my husband and tell him I was sorry, out I went on to the jetty (taking baby with me and a basket for the fish) to meet Rob when his boat, the *Pretty Poll*, should get in. But there was no sign of her.

"Where's the *Pretty Poll* and my Rob?" I called to old Ned Blake, the first fisher that landed.

"Dunno, missis," said he; "I saw a boat a good way off, with her mast broke, but we couldn't get nigh her, and we had all we could do to get home."

"Don't take on so, Mrs. Rob," said another of the men. "May-be he'll turn up later on."

But night came, and darkness, but no Rob; and the storm raged and the sea roared, and now I began to give up hope, and sinking down on the floor by the hearth I sobbed out my trouble to the Almighty, praying Him to forgive my sin against Himself and against the husband that I hadn't known how much I loved till now.

Hark! Was that a step along the cliff path outside? I jumped up, straining my ears to listen. The feet stopped at the door, and flinging it open I saw a sad, pale face and dripping clothes; but, thank God, they were Rob's!

For a moment, being that glad and thankful, I couldn't speak; and he said, "Bess, I'm come out of great peril; and now I'm here, remembering what you said to me in the morning, I'm half sorry God spared my life. For oh," said he, his voice breaking, "what's life to me without my wife's love?—my wife that's wishing she'd married——"

"Don't, Rob—don't," I sobbed, with my arms about him. "God has shown me plain enough this night who it is I love with all my heart, and it's you, my husband. Drunken Joe, indeed! Why, I wouldn't so much as look at him! No, my dear old fisher lad's the only one for me!"

"Then, wife," says Rob, "while those words are fresh on your lips and love warm in your heart, let us here, before Him who sees us both, confess our sin for quarrelling and falling out. Yes, Bess, let's promise God and each other that, in His strength, we will live as He would have us, loving and peaceable, consecrating these lives of ours to Him."

And with my arms round my husband's dear neck and my head upon his shoulder, I said, "Yes, Rob, let us!"

And this promise, made so solemnly, we've kept ever since.

MONA.

LACE-MAKERS IN DEVONSHIRE.

BY I. L. RICHMOND.

REAL lace, which is now so highly valued, is a very different thing from the products of machinery, however pretty, differing somewhat in the same way in which music, when the keys are touched by a master-hand, is superior to the tune of the mechanical barrel-organ; inasmuch as individuality is always far above stereotype.

Perhaps there is no more beautiful lace than that made in the cottages of Devon—"Honiton" lace, as it is called, although the whole of the south of Devon (especially the country round Exmouth, Torquay, etc.) contributes its quota to this industry, to the great advantage of the lace-makers.

The finest Honiton lace is made in separate sprays, on the lace-pillow, and afterwards joined together by hand, without any net under it, this being called Honiton point-lace. A less expensive lace is made by appliqué-work of small sprays on fine net, often bordered more or less deeply with the more valuable point-lace in a larger pattern. One of the charms of this lace is that fern-fronds, flowers, etc., can be so well represented in it—the well-known "Royal" pattern of the rose, the shamrock, and the thistle, being a case in point; while fern-patterns, in variety, are wonderfully elegant, the rich film of the Honiton point-lace being specially adapted to reproduce these delicate forms. But the

Making Honiton Lace.

Royal Arms, crests, and even mottoes can also be had in this lace, with initial letters for fine handkerchiefs or linen, and many other quaint devices, the working out of which on the pillow makes this employment both interesting and lucrative.

Lace-making is specially suited for elderly women, who find in it a congenial employment when unable to do the harder work of the house; but women of all ages are glad to set up a "pillow," which brings so much "grist to the mill," while it also does good in filling up spare time at home, and so preventing much idle gossip.

Quite young children are taught the art, and at one time, before the Education Act was passed, it is to be feared that young people were sometimes kept too long at their lace-pillows for their health and general well-being. But this is not so at the present time, for the strict laws forbidding their being made to work until their education has been attended to have brought about a better state of things, and it is now more as a valuable art for after-life that young people are instructed in lace-making, and there are few better home employments for the cottager. Perfect cleanliness is a necessity, for the lace must not be soiled in any way, or it loses its value; the materials are cheap, and it is only the skill of the lace-maker which develops them into this exquisite material, fit to adorn the highest ladies in the land.

Thirty or forty years ago few Devonshire ladies

appeared on their marriage morning without a veil of Honiton lace; but the French fashion of "tulle" veils, so far less dainty, did away with the real lace for some years.

Now, however, the older fashion is revived, and real lace of all kinds is more valuable than ever. This has largely been brought about by the kind thoughtfulness of the Princess of Wales (herself an adept at many homely arts), the Queen, and the Princess May, all of whom have collections of rare lace of great value; for they lose no opportunity of patronising the real English lace of Devonshire in every possible way, this ranking as the most beautiful of all our British laces.

Pillow lace is said to have been invented by Barbara, the wife of Christopher Uttman, at St. Annaberg, in Saxony, about the year 1561. This clever woman had a large family, and it certainly was not in "learned leisure" that she evolved the delicate art of pillow-lace making.

She died at the age of sixty-one, leaving sixty-four descendants, many of whom no doubt carried on the exquisite work, of which there are now so many distinct sections—such as Brussels, Mechlin, Valenciennes, Limerick, Buckinghamshire, and last, but not least, Honiton lace.

Besides the pillow, the small loom for making bobbin-net (represented in our picture) was worked at home in former days, when machinery was not so much used as at present; and this hand-loom net is still highly thought of by lovers of lace.

Being more easily managed and less complicated than the making of point-lace, the younger workers were usually taught to work this hand-loom, and make the net required for foundations, before they were entrusted with the "pillow" work; and the combined efforts of the sweet-faced "grannie" and her young granddaughter will no doubt add many a comfort to the cottage home, besides paying the rent.

MOTHERS IN COUNCIL.

CONDUCTED BY MRS. E. M. WATERWORTH, AUTHOR OF "MOTHERS AT HOME," ETC.

October 1st, 1896.

MY DEAR FRIENDS,—I have made a discovery, and I want to share it with you. It struck me suddenly the other day that many of us are shockingly *mean* in our treatment of God. There, I believe I have horrified some of you, but I can't help it. Just think for a minute. What should we mothers say if our children never spoke to us, except when they wanted something? Should we not reproach them? Would not our hearts be sadly wounded? Surely, yes; and yet I believe that thousands of us treat our Father in heaven in that way.

Are not our religious devotions for the most part a list of the things which we want for ourselves or our belongings? This is what I call treating God meanly. Yet to Him we owe all we have and are, and all we hope to be. Can we not try to take a delight in talking to Him oftener? Greeting Him each day as we love our children to greet us, not with a petition first, but with a morning offering of love and praise? Let us try to *praise* more, and beg less, and we shall certainly learn more of the peace *in* God which passes all understanding. So shall we grow into earnest, loving, CHEERFUL Christians. (I should like Mr. Printer to put that word cheerful into extra big type.)

* * * *

If "C. L." had enclosed a stamped envelope she would not have been kept so long without an answer to her question. "The Hills of the Shatemuc," "The Old Helmet," "Queechy," and "The Wide, Wide World," were all written by Elizabeth Wetherell. The other person mentioned had nothing to do with them beyond being related to the authoress. Strange how some people try to crib a little glory sometimes!

* * * *

I hope your young servant has left off picking and stealing by this time, "MAB." It is peculiar that this should be a very common failing with young girls. In some cases I believe that it is a kind of disease due to anæmia, and if you can strengthen the bodily health you will stand a chance of raising the tone of the spiritual. I should give the girl a trial *alone* as you suggest. Possibly she may be all right when there is no one in the house to play scapegoat. If she does not improve I should send her away, for a prolonged course of confounding *meum* and *tuum* even in the matter of biscuits and jam must deaden the conscience, and often extends to "borrowing" money. I hope you have found a purchaser for the Russian veil. The person who was so convinced of the amount which you could get for it, might have turned his benevolence into beneficence by obtaining it for you. (I'm afraid Latin is in the air to-day. If you've got a good dictionary you will see what I mean.)

* * * *

Do any of you believe in the law of compensation? I do most heartily; always have done since the time when, after crying my eyes out over the inches which I lack in height, I came across a girl who seemed to have appropriated my inches and stuck them on the top of her own. I was then compensated by the fact that I could at least hide myself from observation, which she could not, and I had certainly fewer inches of back to ache. What the lanky young lady's make-weight was, I did not stop to consider.

Happy thought! next time you are inclined to growl, look out for the make-weight. You are bound to find it somewhere. All this means that it is a selfish sort of consolation to us Londoners to know that while we lose many of the beauties and pleasures of a country life, we also lose many of the annoyances. A correspondent writes me from a lovely spot in Cornwall to know how to get rid of wood-lice which seem to be rivalling in number the flies of Egyptian fame. I should give them a warm reception in the shape of turpentine, where I could get at their haunts. For inaccessible points I should use a big syringe charged with a strong solution of carbolic acid.

Dear, dear, why will people be so anxious to make their children walk! Here is a pathetic letter from a mother. Her boy is actually seventeen months old, and does not walk alone! My dear "E. D.," don't distress yourself and the youngster. He will walk fast enough when he feels fit for it. Let him crawl as long as he will. I know mothers and nurses as a body object to crawling, because it makes the children rather grubby. But soap and water are cheap. Dirt can be got rid of easily, crooked legs can't. Make some coarse overalls, pick up all your pins and nails, and let the child scramble about on all fours; he will assume the upright when his limbs are strong enough.

* * * *

How about that sofa, "SALLIE"? Varnish can only be taken off by the use of strong acid; but in removing the varnish you will also remove the polish. I should try the acid in a part which does not show much, then wash the mahogany well with water, dry it thoroughly, and finally apply some French polish. I shall be anxious to hear the result.

* * * *

OUR PUZZLE PARAGRAPH.

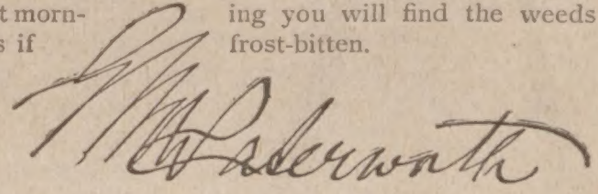
"CLARA" has a neighbour who is constantly wanting to borrow things, from pie-dishes to pennies. What ought "CLARA" to do? Answers should be sent to me, marked Puzzle Paragraph on the outside, at 9, Paternoster Row, London, E.C., before the 15th of the month. A book valued at half-a-crown will be sent to the writer of the best solution of the difficulty.

* * * *

"How can I improve my little girl's hair?" asks a mother. First, do not wet it every day. Wash it once a fortnight with the wash which I gave in our June number. Get the following mixture made up:—Eau de Cologne, two ounces; tincture of cantharides, two drachms; oil of rosemary, ten drops. Rub and brush this into the roots of the hair once or twice a week, and the following evening, rub in a few drops of castor oil, or, if money is no object, brilliantine. Brush the child's head for about ten minutes every day, not in the evening when the child is tired, if you can avoid it. Use a tolerably hard brush, then polish with a soft one. Persevere in this treatment and let me know the result.

* * * *

Weeds! Certainly they are a nuisance in any form, but I imagine it is the vegetable, not the human genus that has distressed "BELLA." The best plan is to sprinkle the paths with salt or strong brine overnight. The next morning you will find the weeds black as if frost-bitten.



MIND HOW YOU PRAISE!

"WHAT a sweet child you have! Isn't she pretty?" said the hostess to a lady caller who was accompanied by two little daughters.

As a rule, mothers are not averse to praise bestowed upon their children; but in this instance the mother was not one bit pleased, for she did not want her little girl to be vain of the beauty that had been her heritage.

"I do not like that lady at all," said the pretty child's sister, as they left the house.

"Why?" asked her mother.

"Because—because—I don't." The child would say no more, but the mother knew full well that an injudicious remark had not only sown the seeds of vanity in one little heart, but seeds of envy in another. She tried to impress upon the youthful minds that a kindly heart is far better than a beautiful face.

Strangers are often thus thoughtless, and even parents themselves. I have seen a mother array her little two-year-old in dainty attire and send her round the room to court flattery.

"Me pitty!" sounds very sweet from baby lips, and one can scarce deny the merited praise; but the haughty air, or conscious toss of the head, which follows the same statement by an older child, are anything but charming.

Yes, they are dainty and sweet and pretty, these little ones, but don't tell them so. They learn it all too soon. Praise the little maiden for her clean face, for the smooth hair which required so much patient endurance to have the tangles removed. Tell her that mother has made her a nice dress, and that she must be very good to pay for it; but don't, don't tell her she's pretty. That is nature's endowment, and has required no exertion, no sacrifice on her part to acquire.

Never allow one child to think that it is preferred before another—especially for mere personal beauty.

OUR NEW MAGAZINE.

MAY we again remind our readers that the first number of Messrs. S. W. Partridge and Co.'s new magazine, THE OSBORNE, will be published on the 23rd of this month? All who have seen advance copies of the magazine agree that it is a marvellous three-pennyworth; and the publishers are convinced that no other publication has ever been produced that offers so large and varied an assortment of the very best literary and pictorial matter for so small a sum.

Where such an abundance of good things is to be found, it is perhaps invidious to select any one item for special mention; but we feel justified in directing the particular attention of readers of *The Mothers' Companion* to the exceedingly interesting notes and domestic chat by "Estelle" which appear under the heading "Woman's World."

THE OSBORNE should be obtainable at every bookseller's shop throughout the country at the very latest by the end of this month. Readers who have any difficulty in procuring a copy are requested to communicate with the publishers, Messrs. S. W. Partridge and Co., at 9, Paternoster Row, London, E.C.

HINTS ON HOME DRESSMAKING.

BY A PRACTICAL DRESSMAKER.

IT is said that this season will show more moderation in dress than that which preceded it, and surely there is need for moderation in some respects. Many materials that were thought very showy a year or so ago now appear quite tame among the extremely vivid and startling contrasts that are worn. But we presume that most of our readers prefer tasty, neat garments of fairly good quality to much of the showy trash that really looks well for a few hours only.

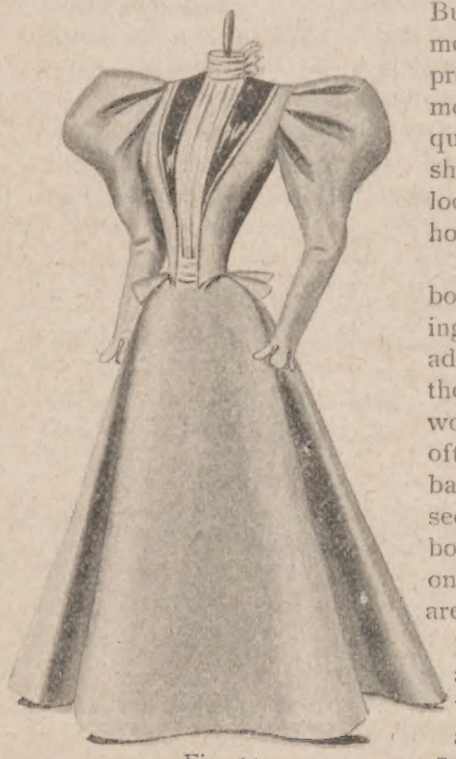


Fig. 34.

The coat-shaped bodice is very becoming to most figures, and admits of a change in the waistcoat front worn with it, which is often desirable. Short basques are usually seen on the jacket bodices which reach only to the sides; they are fluted at the back and plain in front, often set on separately, and when the body seams are piped the basque flutings are piped along each fold to be uniform. There is a decided change in the style of sleeve worn, which will become more and more universal as the season advances. That which is finding most favour at present is the coat shape with a short, very full puff on the shoulder; another design has double full epaulettes in place of the puff. Yet another pattern has the material drawn in its entire length and mounted over a coat-shaped lining, so that it sets close to the arm, although it has a certain amount of fulness. The end of the sleeve is often shaped in square or pointed tabs; these are lined with silk inside and finished with a frill of lace or chiffon, which hangs partly over the hand. There are many novelties in cuffs and collars this season. Although the neck-band usually fits close round the throat, it is always ornamented with frills and ruffles of some thin tissue falling over them.

Fig. 35.

Never before was more delicate taste displayed in every kind of millinery. Both in material and design the utmost variety and skill are seen. Of course, with the autumnal weather quieter colours will obtain, but these may be relieved and brightened with a judicious touch of more vivid tints.

Fig. 34. We show here a dress in the neat, stylish manner of a tailor-made gown. The skirt, which is of moderate fulness, is interlined, and falls in flutes at the back, while the front is quite plain. Everything depends upon the fit of the bodice and the neatness of the work put into it. The back of the bodice is made without a seam down the centre, and the lining in front fastens down the centre, the silk waistcoat fastening over at the side. The loose jacket fronts should be lined with silk, and the revers turned back with velvet. All the sleeve fulness is above the elbow, and the wrist is cut out in tabs which fall over the hand; these should be lined with silk as well as the basque.

Fig. 36.

Fig. 35 shows a girl's blouse dress. The material used is a sort of woollen piqué, and the collar and chemisette are of crepon or nun's veiling. A pleasing variety of colour or shade can be used with advantage in this dress. The collar trimming is brought to a point at the waist, and the chemisette is finished with a turned-down collar, and is made on to a separate lining. Band with ribbon or rosettes finishes the waist.

Fig. 36. The blouse shown here is one that is very easy to make, and yet one that will look well on most occasions. The material used is a figured foulard trimmed with coffee-coloured lace. The yoke is lined with plain material of a deeper colour than the ground of the blouse; a piece of velveteen would look very effective for this purpose. A bishop sleeve set into a band at the wrist is used, with a lace frill falling over from the arm-hole. The neck trimming can be of ribbon or foulard.

Flat patterns can be supplied. Figs. 34, 35, and 36, price 6½d. each, post free. Address "M.C. Pattern," 9, Paternoster Row, London, E.C.

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